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I approached **The Hour of the Wolf** with some trepidation, expecting a hero unrealistically triumphant despite massive odds; a story spiced with the 'death and glory' prose which characterises too many adventure books written for young adults. I was pleasantly surprised - after an unpromising beginning the book offers realism, excitement and a degree of suspense.

Jake Matthiesen attempts suicide as a result of his failure to live up to his father's ambitions. He is sent to recuperate with friends in Alaska where he meets Danny Yumiat, a native Alaskan. When Danny dies Jake determines, as a mark of respect, to run the gruelling 1,600 kilometre dog-sled race for which Danny was training. Descriptive detail is selective and informative, the characters convincing and likeable, and there are intriguing twists in the story. Not great literature, but an entertaining, soundly-written book which third or fourth year boys with a love of the outdoors may well enjoy.

Border Kidnap falls into almost all the traps which **The Hour of the Wolf** avoids. The tortuous storyline has fifteen-year-old Jason - the hero of a terrorist hijack - kidnapped yet again while on a holiday offered as a reward for his earlier exploits!

The story, set in North Thailand, is littered with irritating and confusing references to a variety of native tribes and their tactics in warfare. It is transparently obvious - as the flyleaf confirms - that this is a story written by an ex-soldier over-eager to pass on his considerable knowledge of the area.

The characters are one-dimensional, used as mouthpieces for the author's very decided views on heroism, drug abuse and the skills of jungle warfare. Add to this a written style which is, by turn, repetitive and outmoded, and the end result is a book as unconvincing as **The Hour of the Wolf** is credible.

Running Order:

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